

Los Angeles Times

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Street vendors risk arrest, family breakup to work

These immigrants say they are afraid, but they have bills to pay, people to take care of.

By RUBEN VIVES
AND DAKOTA SMITH

Any day now, Noemi Gongora knows, Border Patrol agents could snatch her up from the streets and send her back to El Salvador, a country she fled more than 30 years ago.

But every morning she steps out of the small bedroom she rents for \$550 a month and goes to work for a street vendor selling cocteles de curiles — clam cocktails.

The stand is one of dozens that make up an informal market that sits along a busy road near the border of Koreatown and Pico Union, two densely populated neighborhoods with a large number of Korean and Central American immigrants, an area likely to be targeted by federal agents.

Gongora, 64, knows this — and that the \$50 she makes a day is not worth the risk of deportation — but there is still a life to be lived and bills to pay. And above all, she needs the money for the medication she uses to manage her cholesterol and diabetes. Medicine that is starting to run out.

Every day, thousands of street vendors set up shop on a piece of pavement in Los Angeles and beyond to make a living and create a path out of poverty or to have their own bricks-and-mortar one day. These self-starters are American citizens and immigrants living in the country legally and illegally, and are part of a \$504-million industry in L.A., according to estimates from the Economic Roundtable, a nonprofit public policy research organization.

But the immigration raids that are taking place across the city — sparking protests, sporadic violence and the deployment of the National Guard and U.S. Marines — have brought

[See Immigrants, A8]

Most detained in L.A.-area raids had no criminal record

Immigration sweeps hit working-age Mexican men hardest, an analysis reveals.

By RACHEL URANGA

As Los Angeles became the epicenter of President Trump's crackdown on undocumented immigrants, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem flew to the city and held a news conference, saying the government's objective was to "bring in criminals that have been out on our street far too long."

But data from the days leading up to that June 12 appearance suggest a majority of those who were arrested were not convicted criminals. Most were working-age men, nearly half Mexican.

From June 1 to June 10, Immigration and Customs Enforcement data show that early in the crackdown 722 were arrested in the Los Angeles region. The figures

were obtained by the Deportation Data Project, a repository of enforcement data at UC Berkeley Law.

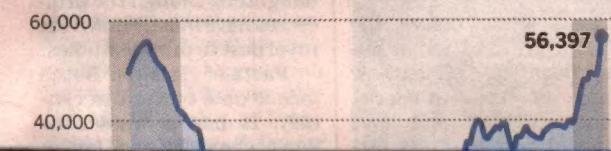
A Times analysis found that 69% of those arrested during that period had no criminal conviction and 58% had never been charged with a crime. The median age of someone arrested was 38, and that person was likely to be a man. Nearly 48% were Mexican, 16% were from Guatemala and 8% from El Salvador.

"They're not going after drug kingpins, they're chasing hardworking people through swap meets and Home Depot parking lots," Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass told The Times. "You can see the impact of these random raids everywhere in our city — families are scared to go eat at restaurants, kids are scared their parents aren't going to return from the store. The fear is there because they've seen videos of people being shoved into unmarked vans by masked men refusing to identify themselves."

[See Raids, A8]

ICE detentions have increased since Trump retook office

Total population of ICE detention centers



FATEMEH BAHRAMI Anadolu



ARIEL SCHALIT Associated Press

IN TEHRAN, top, people celebrate the ceasefire between Iran and Israel. In Tel Aviv, Ayelet Samerano, center, mourns her son, slain hostage Yonatan Samerano.

U.S. to revoke forest protection rule

2001 policy bars road projects and timber harvests in designated federal wild areas.

By HAYLEY SMITH

The United States Department of Agriculture on Monday announced that it will rescind a decades-old rule that protects 58.5 mil-

lion acres of national forestland from road construction and timber harvesting.

The USDA, which oversees the U.S. Forest Service, said it will eliminate the 2001 "Roadless Rule" that established lasting protection for specific wilderness areas within the national forests. Research has found that building roads can fragment habitats, disrupt ecosystems and increase erosion and sediment pollution in

drinking water, among other potentially harmful outcomes.

In a statement, USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins described the rule — which applies to about 30% of national forestland — as outdated and overly restrictive.

"Once again, President Trump is removing absurd obstacles to common-sense management of our natural resources by rescinding the overly restrictive 'Roadless

Rule,'" Rollins said in a statement. "This move opens a new era of consistency and sustainability for our nation's forests. It is abundantly clear that properly managing our forests preserves them from devastating fires and allows future generations of Americans to enjoy and reap the benefits of this great land."

More than 40 states are home to areas protected by

[See Roadless, A7]

Hedge funds gamble on fire

State officials raise alarm as Wall Street seeks to buy claims against SoCal Edison



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JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

PROTESTERS CLASH with law enforcement at the "No Kings Day" demonstration in downtown Los Angeles on June 14.

LAPD defends its tactics at protests

Los Angeles Police Chief Jim McDonnell defended his department's handling of recent protests, saying officers acted appropriately to quell unrest — pushing back against criticism about aggressive crowd control tactics used during demonstrations against President Trump's immigration crackdown.

McDonnell said in a statement Monday that the Los Angeles Police Department would conduct a "comprehensive evaluation of each use-of-force incident." The chief said the LAPD wouldn't shy away from scrutiny and would take action against any officer "who has fallen short" of the department's standards.

The statement referenced a Times article published over the weekend that included accounts from protesters injured by LAPD officers who fired hard foam projectiles and other so-called less-lethal munitions. The conduct of police units mounted on horseback during the protests has also faced scrutiny after vi-

Chief McDonnell denies officers used force indiscriminately, calling actions against ICE demonstrators 'targeted, proportional'

By Libor Jany

deo showed people being trampled and hit with batons.

McDonnell, who has repeatedly declined interview requests, said the story "contains serious accusations, and I do not take them lightly."

He said what was missing from the public narrative was the "dangerous, fluid and ultimately violent conditions our officers encountered."

Although the protests have "most often been marked by peaceful expression," he said, at times they have been "hijacked by violence, vandalism, and criminal aggression."

"When demonstrators began throwing objects, setting fires, and refusing to disperse after repeated lawful orders were given, officers were justified in taking swift and measured action to prevent further harm and restore public safety," McDonnell said.

The chief's statement cited numerous [See Chief, B5]

Raises to hit county budget

Salary bumps could cost \$2 billion over 3 years as government makes cuts elsewhere.

By REBECCA ELLIS

Los Angeles County's looming agreement with its biggest labor union is expected to cost a little more than \$2 billion over three years — the latest hit to a budget beset by financial woes.

The cost estimate, provided to The Times on Monday by the county chief executive office, will necessitate more belt-tightening for a government that's running out of notches.

The deadly January wildfires are expected to cost the county \$2 billion. The Trump administration has threatened cuts that would ravage the county's public health budget. The L.A. County supervisors agreed this year to a historic \$4 billion sex abuse settlement — the largest of its kind in U.S. history — and required most departments to make 3% cuts to help pay for it.

The cuts aren't done, Chief Executive Fesia Davenport warned the supervisors Monday as she walked them through the latest version of the county's sprawling \$49-billion budget.

To pay for salary bumps and bonuses for county workers in the tentative labor agreement, the updated budget slashes \$50.5 million, cutting funding for parks, swimming pools and violence prevention, among other programs. Soon, each department will need to make an additional 5.5% cut, said Davenport, whose office drafts the budget and leads labor negotiations.

"We are taking this extraordinary step because we simply have no alternative," she said.

The supervisors unanimously approved the recommended budget, which included an initial round of cuts to pay for some of the expected labor costs and the sex abuse settlement.

Despite their unanimous vote, the supervisors had little time to say about the plan.

"While the budget may look like it's healthy, it's a sick patient," said Supervisor Hilda Solis.

As a result of the cuts, two probation offices are expected to close. County swimming pools will shut [See Raises, B4]

Judge lets Newsom get data of troops in L.A.

By SONJA SHARP

The Trump administration must turn over a cache of documents, photos, internal reports and other evidence detailing the activities of the military in Southern California, a federal judge ruled Tuesday, handing a procedural victory to the state in its fight to rein in

Palm Springs bomb suspect dies in custody

By RICHARD WINTON

A Washington state man facing terrorism charges related to the bombing of a fertility clinic in Palm Springs has died inside a federal detention facility in Los Angeles, officials said.

Daniel Park, 32, was found unresponsive in his cell at the Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles about 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, officials said.

"Responding employees initiated life-saving mea-

sures, emergency medical services were requested while life-saving measures continued," according to a statement from the Department of Justice. "Mr. Park was transported by EMS to a local hospital and subsequently pronounced deceased by hospital personnel."

No one else was injured and no further details on the cause of death were immediately available.

Park had been in federal custody since his arrest at John F. Kennedy Interna-

tional Airport in New York this month and was charged with providing and attempting to provide material support to a terrorist.

He was accused of helping Guy Edward Bartkus secure 270 pounds of ammonium nitrate, an explosive precursor that can be used to construct homemade bombs.

Bartkus, 25, is suspected of detonating a bomb at American Reproductive Centers on May 17, killing himself and injuring four people. The blast created a

debris field across 250 yards.

Days after the bombing, authorities say, Park left the U.S. for Europe. Polish law enforcement eventually detained him and deported him back to the United States, where he was taken into custody upon arriving in New York. When Park was confronted by Polish authorities, he attempted to harm himself, according to an FBI affidavit. Park made his initial appearance in federal court in Brooklyn before being transferred to Los Angeles. [See Bombing, B5]

Voices GUSTAVO ARELLANO COLUMNIST

LAPD chief denies use of indiscriminate force

[Chief, from B1]

"documented" cases in which officers were "violently attacked" with bottles, bricks, Molotov cocktails and commercial-grade fireworks. Fifty-two officers suffered injuries that required medical treatment, he said.

The department's critics, he said, were using "edited video clips or anecdotal accounts as definitive evidence of misconduct."

McDonnell disputed the allegation that officers failed to give dispersal orders before firing hard foam projectiles or tear gas, saying demonstrators were given notice to leave in English and Spanish — "using ground-level amplified systems or, when necessary, by helicopter."

He also denied officers

'[O]fficers were justified in taking swift and measured action to prevent further harm and restore public safety.'

— JIM McDONNELL, LAPD chief, on police tactics at recent protests

used force indiscriminately, saying actions against protesters were "targeted, proportional, and made in direct response to immediate, credible threats."

But numerous eyewitness

ness accounts from protesters — along with several videos that have gone viral online in recent weeks — raise questions about whether LAPD officers used force on people who posed no threat.

After paying out millions over the last decade for protest-related lawsuits, the department again probably faces a wave of civil litigation by plaintiffs alleging excessive force.

A coalition of press rights organizations filed a lawsuit this month that described journalists being shot with less-lethal police rounds, tear-gassed and detained without cause by LAPD officers during the protests.

John Burton, an attorney who is representing three injured protesters — including



CARLIN STIEHL Los Angeles Times

ANTI-ICE protesters are pushed back by the LAPD during a demonstration.

one whose testicle was ruptured by a foam projectile — said video from the demonstrations shows officers rou-

tinely flouting state regulations that govern crowd control tactics.

"Have these people

learned nothing?" Burton said. "We went through this with George Floyd and how many times before."

Dog trainer, girlfriend are charged in 11 canine deaths

By JASMINE MENDEZ

An Irvine couple operating a dog training service was charged with multiple felony counts Monday involving the deaths of at least 11 dogs, with some of the animals being cremated before they could be examined.

Kwong "Tony" Chun Sit, 53, of Irvine and his girlfriend, Tingfeng Liu, 23, of Vista, were arrested last week, both on suspicion of animal cruelty and destruction of evidence, according to an Irvine Police Department news release.

One of the victims' owners tipped off authorities a day before the arrest. They said they'd received a message from the trainer saying their dog had died in its sleep and been cremated.

"The one family reached out to us [and] thought it was kind of suspicious that their healthy dog died with this trainer," Irvine police spokesperson Kyle Oldorp told The Times on Thursday.

Upon investigating, the department's Animal Services Unit found more than one canine victim.

The Orange County district attorney's office confirmed in a news release Monday that at least 11 dogs died in Sit's possession. All of the bodies, including those cremated, were recovered.

Investigators found that two dogs died from heatstroke, and one died from blunt-force trauma.

Two dogs were cremated before they could be examined, and the remains were later turned over to the owners.

At least six animals have pending necropsies, prosecutors said.

Authorities believe the couple dropped off the first dog at a crematorium on June 13. By June 18, the total number of dead bodies rose to 11.

"Our dogs love us unconditionally, and to have someone who advertised himself as a dog lover who would treat his clients' dogs as his

own be not only responsible for the deaths of these pets but then to enlist his girlfriend to cover up the animal abuse is beyond repulsive," Dist. Atty. Todd Spitzer said in a statement. "No animal deserves to be killed and then tossed aside like a piece of garbage. The abuse of any animal will not be tolerated."

Sit, who operated the dog training service K9 Academy, faces 30 counts: 11 felony counts of animal cruelty, 11 felony counts of animal abuse by a caretaker, seven misdemeanor counts of attempting to destroy evidence, and one misdemeanor count of destroying evidence.

Liu, who is believed to have helped Sit drop off the dogs at the crematoriums, faces four counts: one felony count of accessory to a felony, one misdemeanor count of destruction of evidence, and two misdemeanor counts of attempted destruction of evidence.

The couple remain in custody in lieu of \$550,000 bail.

The bail amount was increased after prosecutors said the couple were packed and ready to flee before they were arrested.

Sit faces a maximum sen-

tence of 13 years and Liu four years if they are each convicted on all charges, according to the district attorney's office.

K9 Academy offered a variety of training programs for animals, such as sessions on behavioral training ranging in price from \$999 to \$3,999.

The Irvine Police Department said there could be more victims given that Sit operated under different company names throughout Southern California.

Anyone with information related to the case or whose dog died in the care of Sit is asked to contact rsteen@cityofirvine.org.

Obituaries

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Joseph Carl Dawidziak

August 16, 1946 - May 27, 2025

Joseph "Joe" Carl Dawidziak, long-time Redondo Beach resident, passed away May 27, 2025 in Long Beach, CA, following open heart surgery.

Joe, the eldest of five children born to Claire and Joseph Dawidziak, was born August 16, 1946 in Huntington, NY. After graduation from Harbor fields High School ('64), he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was assigned to Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., where he participated in ceremonies, parades, funerals and security details for President Lyndon Johnson at Camp David.

Having joined the Marines to become a warrior in defense of his country, Joe requested a transfer to Vietnam. He was deployed to Vietnam in 1966, serving one combat tour. After separation from active duty in 1968, Joe completed a long, productive career in the Marine Corps Reserve, retiring in 2003 as a highly decorated CWO 4.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Joe was employed as a Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriff, an investigator for the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office and a private investigator.

Joe married Ann Maloney in 1983; daughter, Claire, was born in 1987. Joe was a devoted husband, father and family man.

In 1991, Joe was elected to the Redondo Beach City Council. He remained active in municipal affairs, serving on the Redondo Beach Charter Review Commission in 2003.

Joe is survived by his wife, Ann, daughter, Claire; son-in-law Kyle Pretsch; sister Jane Dawidziak NY; brother Michael Dawidziak (wife Pam) NY, brother Mark Dawidziak (wife Sara) OH, and many other family members.

A funeral Mass for Joe



Joe George Petrotta

April 23, 1929 - June 16, 2025

Joe George Petrotta, 96, of Pasadena, California, passed away peacefully at home on June 16, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Born in Los Angeles on April 23, 1929, Joe was the son of Rose Cuccia and Anthony Petrotta. From humble beginnings—selling newspapers at age 7—Joe carried a strong work ethic and zest for life through every chapter of his journey. He attended Griffin Avenue Grammar School and Lincoln High School, later continuing his education at UCLA before earning his degree from Cal State Los Angeles.

Joe was drafted into the U.S. Army and completed his basic training at Fort Ord in Monterey County. He was then assigned to the Army Language School, where he served as head librarian. It was during this time that he married the love of his life, Rosemary Proledo. They were wed at Sacred Heart Catholic Church and went on to share 72 beautiful years of marriage.

After his military service, Joe became a 7th-grade history and math teacher, sharing his knowledge and steady guidance with his students. Always open to new challenges, he later pursued a license in cosmetology and eventually took over Marcello's Beauty Salon in Highland Park, a family business founded by his in-laws, Marcello and Dora Proledo, in 1929.

Joe was a man of many passions, but above all, he was a devoted family man. He cherished his role as husband, father, grandfather, and friend. Joe's joy was found in the everyday moments — family gatherings, travel adventures across the U.S. and abroad, and a deep appreciation for life's simple pleasures.

An avid golfer, Joe's love for the game was legendary among friends and family. He achieved the rare feat of four holes-in-one and played his last 18 holes at the age of 92. He also found joy in dancing, often joining his wife at Italian Women's Club and Las Floristas functions, where he never missed a chance to hit the dance floor and enjoy the company of dear friends.

Joe is survived by his beloved wife, Rosemary Petrotta; his daughter, Michele Gilmour; son-in-law, John Lawrence Gilmour; and granddaughter, Katherine Rose Gilmour. He is preceded in death by his son, David Anthony Petrotta.

A Celebration of Life and Memorial Mass will be held at St. Andrew Catholic Church in Pasadena on Friday, July 11, at 11:00 AM, officiated by Father Marcos Gonzales. A reception will follow the service.

Flowers may be sent to St. Andrew Catholic Church. In lieu of flowers, the family also welcomes donations to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, a cause close to Joe's heart.

Bombing suspect dies in custody

[Bombing, from B1]

geles. Park was accused of shipping about 180 pounds of ammonium nitrate in January and later paying for an additional 90 pounds of the chemical to be shipped to Bartkus in the days leading up to the Palm Springs attack.

U.S. Atty. Bill Essayli, the top federal prosecutor in Los Angeles, said Park spent two weeks visiting Bartkus in Twentynine Palms in late January and early February. Three days before Park arrived at his house, according to a federal criminal complaint, Bartkus researched how to make powerful explosions using ammonium nitrate and fuel.

Bartkus and Park allegedly ran experiments together in Bartkus' garage, from which the FBI recovered large quantities of chemical precursors and lab equipment after the bombing.

According to FBI Assistant Director for Los Angeles Akil Davis, Park had a similar ideology to Bartkus and posted about these ideologies on internet forums dating to 2016.



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

THE BLAST in Palm Springs shredded the remains of bomber Guy Edward Bartkus, sources said.

Davis said six packages of ammonium nitrate were shipped from Park in Seattle to Bartkus. He said officials are awaiting the results of an analysis of the explosive precursor chemicals shipped from Park.

The FBI described the Palm Springs blast — powerful enough to damage

the blast. There are also YouTube videos under a web alias associated with Bartkus, and threads on Reddit and a suicide forum.

In those, Bartkus voiced despondence over the death of a "best friend," Sophie, who lived in Washington and ran multiple social media sites espousing radical femi-



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

SAND OF THE FREE

One of a pair of sea lion pups is released Tuesday near the Hermosa Beach Pier after medical treatment.

Judge seeks data of military in L.A.

[Military, from B1] Honolulu said the judiciary must broadly defer to the president to decide whether a “rebellion” was underway and whether civilians protesting over immigration agents had sufficiently hampered deportations to warrant assistance from the National Guard or the Marines. Bennett wrote that the president has the authority to take action under a statute that “authorizes federalization of the National Guard when ‘the President is unable with the regular forces to execute the laws of the United States.’” But neither court has yet opined on California’s other major claim: that by aiding immigration raids, troops under Trump’s command violated the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which forbids soldiers from enforcing civilian laws. Shilpi Agarwal, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, argued that the White House is abusing the



GINA FERRAZZI Los Angeles Times

MEMBERS of the clergy join others protesting outside the downtown L.A. Federal Building on June 10. post-Civil War law — known in legal jargon as the PCA — by having soldiers support Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations. “There isn’t a dispute that what the National Guard is doing right now is prohibited by the PCA — legally it absolutely has to be,” Agarwal said. “Going out with ICE officers into the community and playing a role in individual ICE raids really feels like what the Posse Comitatus Act was de-

signed to prohibit.” In his June 12 order, Breyer, of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, wrote that such a claim was “premature,” saying that there was not yet sufficient evidence to weigh whether that law had been broken. The 9th Circuit agreed. “Although we hold that the President likely has authority to federalize the National Guard, nothing in our decision addresses the nature of the activities in which the federalized National Guard may engage,” Bennett wrote. “Before the district court, Plaintiffs argued that certain uses of the National Guard would violate the Posse Comitatus Act. ... We express no opinion on it. Now, California has permission to compel that evidence from the government, as well as to depose figures including Ernesto Santacruz, Jr., the director of the ICE field office in L.A., and Maj. Gen. Niave F. Knell, who heads operations for the Army department in charge of “homeland defense.” With few exceptions, such evidence would immediately become public, another win for Californians, Agarwal said. “As the facts are further developed in this case, I think it will be come more abundantly clear to everyone how little this invocation of the National Guard was based on,” she said. In its Monday briefing, the Trump administration

Raises could cost county \$2 billion

[Raises, from B1] down earlier. Regional parks will now close two days a week. “Like every other Angeleno, I’m mad too,” said Supervisor Holly Mitchell, who noted a petition she had seen on Nextdoor that morning protesting the two-day-a-week closure of Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in her district. The county announced last week that it had reached a tentative agreement with SEIU 721, which represents 55,000 county workers. The agreement, which still needs to be ratified by the union membership and the supervisors, includes a \$5,000 bonus in the first year, followed by a 2% cost of living adjustment and \$2,000 bonus in the second year and a 5% salary increase the third year. The county is in negotiations with 15 smaller unions. The \$2-billion price tag assumes that those unions will adopt similar salary increases and bonuses as SEIU 721. To pay for the new labor costs, the chief executive office said the county will dip into its general fund for \$778 million. The remaining \$1.2 billion or so will come from federal and state funds meant for staffing costs.

David Green, the head of SEIU 721, said his members were “thrilled” with the tentative contract — the fruit of months of negotiations and a two-day strike this spring. Last year, the city of Los Angeles agreed to contracts covering 33,000 union workers, many of whom would receive a pay increase of 24% over the next five years. The contracts, which the city estimated would add \$3.5 billion in costs over five years, were a contributing factor in a massive budget shortfall that the City Council closed with layoffs and other spending cuts. Green, who negotiated with both the city and county, said comparing the two was like “apples and oranges.” “The economic climate has gotten worse in a lot of ways,” he said. “I think you felt a little bit of that in L.A. County bargaining.” County supervisors appeared supportive of the agreement in Monday’s meeting, though quick to span the overall financial picture. “This is a budget I don’t like — I don’t think anyone does,” said Hahn. But it could be worse, she said. “I know this is a budget that won’t put us in the hole,” she said.

argued that troops were “merely performing a protective function,” not enforcing the law. “Nothing in the preliminary injunction record plausibly supports a claim that the Guard and Marines are engaged in execution of federal laws rather than efforts to protect the personnel and property used in the execution of federal laws,” the Justice Department’s motion said. The federal government also claimed that even if troops were enforcing the law, that would not violate the Posse Comitatus Act — and if it did, the Northern District of California would have only limited authority to rule on it. “Given the Ninth Cir-

cuit’s finding, it would be illogical to hold that, although the President can call up the National Guard when he is unable “with the regular forces to execute the laws of the United States,” the Guard, once federalized, is forbidden from “execut[ing] the laws,” the motion said. For Agarwal and other civil liberties experts, the next few weeks will be crucial. “There’s this atmospheric Rubicon we have crossed when we say based on vandalism and people throwing things at cars, that can be justification for military roaming our streets,” the lawyer said. “There was more unrest when the Lakers won the championship.”

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OPINION VOICES



DANIA MAXWELL Los Angeles Times

THE HOSPITAL'S Center for Transyouth Health and Development was abruptly shuttered.

Voices GABRIEL KAHN GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Children's Hospital threw trans kids overboard

The government threatened to punish CHLA, and it caved. That's no way to decide treatment plans.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL Los Angeles is the pre-eminent center for pediatric medicine in Southern California. For three decades, it's also been one of the world's leading destinations for trans care for minors. Don't take my word for it: CHLA boasts about its record of providing "high-quality, evidence-based, medically essential care for transgender and gender-diverse youth, young adults, and their families."

Earlier this month, it abruptly ended all that, telling its staff in a meeting that the Center for Transyouth Health and Development would be shutting down. (My daughter was, until this announcement, a patient at the center.)

Did some new medical breakthrough, some unexpected research drive the decision to cut off care for roughly 2,500 patients with no warning? No. It came, the hospital said, after "a thorough legal and financial assessment of the increasingly severe impacts of recent administrative actions and proposed policies."

In other words, the hospital caved. In advance.

CHLA made the move a week before the Supreme Court's 6-3 decision in the United States vs. Skrmetti, which upheld a Tennessee law that bans most gender-affirming care for minors. More than 20 states have passed similar laws that prevent trans minors from accessing many different forms of medical care. The decision essentially shields those laws from future legal challenges.

But the Supreme Court ruling had nothing to do with CHLA's decision. There is no such law in California.

Why, then, without any court order or law, did the center suddenly close, leaving so many young patients in need of doctors, medications and procedures? You can probably guess the answer.

Pressure from the Trump administration threatened the hospital with severe repercussions if it continued to serve these patients. One form of pressure arrived in a May 28 letter from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, signed by its administrator, the former TV host Dr. Mehmet Oz. He announced that his agency would seek financial records on a range of gender-affirming care procedures from several dozen hospitals.

Being faced with the choice of discontinuing care for an entire class of patients or battling the

administration over access to financial records is not a dilemma any doctor wants to face. To be clear, this is not a debate over medical science or proper care for trans youth. CHLA followed the science — until it didn't. This is a debate over ideology about who is deserving of medical care.

In the past few months, we have seen powerful law firms, large corporations and universities forced to contend with difficult bargains. Settle with an administration that has singled you out? Or take the battle to court?

In February, when Children's

Hospital announced that it would stop taking on new patients in its Transyouth Center, California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta sternly reminded them that they had a legal obligation to continue to provide this care. The hospital quickly reversed course.

That's why the recent choice of the CHLA board marks a huge shift that could potentially affect care for not just trans youth patients but so many others as well.

Because what the board of CHLA did was, in fact, a choice. Moreover, CHLA's choice went against its own medical advice

about the urgent need for such care. On its website, the hospital claims it was "immensely proud of this legacy of caring for young people on the path to achieving their authentic selves."

When confronted with threats, the board chose to sacrifice the care of one group of patients in the hope that it could continue to care for others. Perhaps the board concluded that it was following a crude, utilitarian logic: denying the medical needs of some would allow it to provide for many more.

That's not how I see it. In caving to blackmail, they have endorsed the administration's bigotry. They have demonstrated that trans youth are expendable. The board has made it clear that this group of patients is not as deserving of care as others. When CHLA faced actual pressure, its own record of providing "high-quality, evidence-based, medically essential care" simply became too inconvenient.

This time, it was trans youth. Who will it be next time? Disabled children? Children born outside the U.S.? CHLA agreed to play the game rather than call it out for what it is.

As a journalist, I occasionally grant anonymity to a source. It's not an action I take lightly. The decision means that if pressured, even when threatened with contempt of court, I will not reveal their identity. Thankfully, it's never come to that for me, although other journalists have gone to jail to protect sources. If I were to break that pledge once, I could never in good conscience grant it again.

I now wonder how doctors at CHLA can ever look their young patients in the eye again and promise that, no matter what, they will fight for their care.

GABRIEL KAHN is a professor of professional practice at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

LETTERS



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

FEDERAL agents were denied entry to Dodger Stadium grounds on June 19.

Dodgers have more to answer for

Re "Dodgers say they denied parking lot entry to ICE agents," June 20

WHILE it's nice that the Dodger Stadium grounds denied entry to federal agents, it is but a gesture. The ownership, management and players of the Dodgers owe the people of Los Angeles and this nation a public letter of apology for having attended the White House and bowed to the authority of President Trump, despite his daily inhumane and antidemocratic words and actions. Not a single one of them had the courage to speak up on that day.

welfare and rights of the many." He then defines the "few," at least in part, as the teachers' and government employees' unions.

Goldberg misses the big picture. It's the Republican Party that consistently gives tax cuts to the rich and the corporations while they pay lip service to the middle class and are openly hostile to the poor. It's the Republican Party that seems to hate the unions — the economic movement that has most benefited the middle class and the working class. It's the Republican Party that is hostile to anything that helps consumers and the environment. It's the Republican Party that wants to dismantle Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, food stamps, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Donald Trump conned millions of Americans into believing that he is a populist who is looking out for their interests. The White House's Department of Government Efficiency cut government funding and services for programs that help the middle class and the poor, and now Trump is seeking tax cuts for the rich

moved downtown to be within walking distance of the major arts, cultural and sports venues that I love. Not only could I ditch my car, but I would be living in a diverse neighborhood full of millennials and their dogs along with expats of all ages.

That lure of downtown is still alive and kicking today as it attracts new residents despite difficult times. The resiliency of downtown was demonstrated in the aftermath of the devastating pandemic which, I believe, was a factor in fostering the comeback. That resiliency remains at play today as the downtown community works with public officials to help advance solutions to the major challenges besetting our neighborhood and those across the city. May the good news continue.

BILLIE GREER
Los Angeles

The sad state of elder care costs

Re "How many can afford elder care at \$18,000 a month?," California Voices, June 22

Thank you, columnist Steve Lopez, for putting the

money saved from cutting Medicaid!

SUSAN CALHOUN
Lynwood

Most people can't afford to have someone care for themselves alone 24 hours a day. In their final years, my parents lived in an assisted living facility for about half of what Reiko Kobata pays per person for in-home care. Sure, there are adjustments for an older person to move to assisted living. But I think the benefits of assisted living, including social opportunities and arranged medical appointments, make the move worthwhile. And if Kobata were to move, she could make economic use of her house, such as by renting it.

MICHAEL POLLAK
Los Angeles

Shootings affect all of America

Re "Trump rejects calling Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz after shootings," June 18

When asked if he's called Gov. Tim Walz out of sympathy and concern for the

Voices CHU

The

With Iran on both President Prime Minister Netanyahu can

FOLLOWING tack on Iran nuclear fa Fordo, Na han, Tehr ing but bad option Iran can escalate attacking U.S. fore the region, as it did with missile attack in Qatar and Iraq. I close the Strait of H draw from the nuclea eration treaty or eve rapid "breakout" ru with its residual cap of these options virt an American milita that goes far beyond program, possibly le targeted campaign to regime, the Islamic R greatest nightmare. A more likely milita would therefore be fo respond by continuing Israel — as it did just the U.S. strike, is